

New York

Hi. I'm Mike Greer, Senior Human Resources Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Vienna. I come from the Empire State, better known as New York.

Most people know my state because of its famous city – also called New York or, The Big Apple. NYC was first called The Big Apple in the 1920s by sports writer John J. Fitz Gerald. The nickname became really famous through an ad campaign in the 1970s.

The Big Apple grew because of its proximity to Ellis Island, which was once the main immigration point into the US. Many of the 12 million immigrants who passed through Ellis Island didn't have enough money to move on. They stayed in New York City, giving it a reputation of multiculturalism and the birthplace of the American Dream. Today, roughly 8 million people live in New York City, making it the largest city in the United States. Hundreds of languages are still spoken in New York.

The United Nations is also headquartered here, so it's also an important city for international diplomacy. Between Wall Street and the New York Stock Exchange, NYC is one of the financial capitals of the World.

NYC is also home to many cultural landmarks: Times Square, Broadway, the Statue of Liberty; as well as famous art museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art. 50 million tourists visit the city each year, spending more than \$30 billion.

Let me tell you a little bit about the rest of my home state.

New York is the 3rd most populous state, with 19 million inhabitants.

There are so many famous people from New York it would take too long to name them all here. But some of my favorites are former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, Presidents Franklin Delano and Theodore Roosevelt and comedian Jerry Seinfeld and musician Billy Joel, who has ties to Vienna.

Despite having such a high population, New York is only the 27th largest state, with a total land area of 47,213 square miles. My hometown is Seaford, located on Long Island, an island 200 kilometers long that stretches from Brooklyn to Montauk Point. It is known for its fine beaches and high quality of life.

Englishman Henry Hudson discovered New York in 1609, claiming it for his employer, the Dutch East India Company. Dutch settlers traded furs and goods with the Algonquin and Iroquois Native American tribes. They named the settlement New Amsterdam. The English captured the colony in the 1664, and renamed it New York, after the Duke of York. As one of the original 13 colonies, NY played a key role in the American Revolution. And In 1778 New York became the 11th state.

Most of my state is covered by farms, forests, lakes, rivers and mountains. New York's most famous natural attraction is Niagara Falls, which brings some 30 million visitors a year. In Upstate New York, you can find the Finger Lakes, some of the deepest, longest lakes in the US, and Adirondack Park, which encompasses the Adirondack Mountains and surrounding forest. Covering 6 million acres, it's the largest park in the U.S.

New York is the 3rd leading producer of dairy products in the US, and its climate is ideal for growing grapes and apples. A lot of interesting foods were invented in New York. The first ice cream sundae was made in 1892 in Ithaca. And yes, it was on a Sunday.

The first potato chip was made in 1853 in Saratoga Springs, when a chef wanted to get back at his customers for complaining that his fried potatoes were too thick. So he cut them paper thin, over fried them and doused them with salt. Little did he know he had invented America's number one snack.

Peter Cooper, who built the first American locomotive, also tried his hand at dessert and created Jell-O in 1845. He is also the founder of Cooper University in New York, which has trained generations of engineers, including my own father.

New York has a rich history in education. It has two Ivy League schools, Colombia University and Cornell University and a highly regarded state university system.

Sports fans also love New York. The New York Yankees, my personal all time favorite sports team, is one of the oldest and most famous baseball teams in America, not to mention one of the most successful having won 27 championships (check facts). NY also is home to the Giants and the Jets football teams, even though the Giants really play in NJ, the Knicks basketball team and the NY Redbulls soccer team. And of course, the baseball hall of fame is in Cooperstown, NY, where famous New York Yankee players such as Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig are honored.

My favorite thing about my home state is our accent and the way we communicate with each other. We have a unique way of talking or should I say tawking. We also talk very fast, love to interrupt, have a great sense of humor, and always have a "comeback," a humorous response to everything.

As the great add campaign of the 1980's said, "I love New York, it's a great vacation" and I hope you will take the opportunity to visit my home state.